PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT
Appln. No.: 09/816,306

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claim 1 to read as follows:

1. (Once Amended) A method for multi-casting video content to plural user computers, the method comprising:

distributing a video content program from a content center to plural regional data centers via an open network;

distributing the video content program from each of the plural regional data centers to user computers network-connected to the plural regional data centers according to a multi-cast protocol; and

transmitting non-video data related to the video content program to the user computers for display by the user computers contemporaneously with the video content program.

Add new claims 2-21 as follows:

- -- 2. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 1 wherein the multi-cast protocol further comprises

 Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP) and class D addressing with private multi-cast addresses.
- 3. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 1, wherein the open network is selected from the group consisting of a satellite network, a terrestrial wireless network, a cable network, and a fiber optic network.

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- 4. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 1, wherein the user computers are network-connected via a distribution network selected from the group consisting of a satellite network, a terrestrial wireless network, a cable network, and a fiber optic network.
- 5. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 4, wherein the distribution network is interactive and wherein the method further comprises:

receiving the video content program and the non-video data at at least one of the user computers connected to the distribution network;

displaying the video content program on the at least one user computer through a graphical user interface (GUI), the GUI further comprising an object button associated with an object in the video content program and a control button associated with the display of the video content program;

generating, at the at least one user computer, user data corresponding to selection of the object button or the control button by the user;

receiving the user data at the regional data center to which the at least one user computer is network-connected;

processing the user data received from the user; and sending a response to the at least one user computer.

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- 6. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 5, wherein the video content program comprises a game and the user data comprises game play.
- 7. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 5, wherein the video content program comprises a plurality of selectable responses and the user data comprises a response selected by the user.
- 8. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 5, wherein the object button is associated with information data,

wherein the user data reflects the user's selection of the object button, and

wherein the response to the user comprises the information data.

9. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 5, wherein the object button is associated with an offer to sell goods or services,

wherein the user reflects the user's selection of the object button, and

wherein the response to the user comprises the offer.

10. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of

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claim 5, wherein the video content program comprises a prerecorded program,

wherein non-video data comprises a control command associated with the control button,

wherein the user data reflects the user's selection of the control button, and

wherein the response to the user comprises executing the control command.

- 11. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 10 wherein the control command is selected from the group consisting of video stop, video start, video rewind, video pause, video freeze frame, video slow motion, video display size, video image save, program menu, channel selection, volume, and audio mute.
- 12. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 5, further comprising:

requesting preference information from the user;

receiving preference information from the user at the regional control center;

storing preference information associated with the user at the regional data center; and

processing preference information to provide distribution of

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video content program and processing of user data in accordance . with the preference information.

- 13. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 12, wherein the preference information comprises parental control data.
- 14. (New) The method for multi-casting video content of claim 12, wherein the preference information further comprises user transaction data.
- 15. (New) A system for multi-casting video content to plural user computers, the system comprising:
- a content server comprising a first processor, a first storage means, and a first memory, the first memory comprising a first set of software instructions, the first set of software instructions comprising instructions for distributing a video content program from a content center to plural regional data centers via an open network;
- a distribution server comprising a second processor, a second storage means, and a second memory, the second memory comprising a second set of software instructions, the second set of software instructions comprising instructions for:
 - 16. (New) The system of claim 15 wherein the multi-cast

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protocol further comprises Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP) and class D addressing with private multi-cast addresses.

- 17. (New) The system of 15, wherein the open network is selected from the group consisting of a satellite network, a terrestrial wireless network, a cable network, and a fiber optic network.
- 18. (New) The system of claim 15, wherein the user computers are network-connected via a distribution network selected from the group consisting of a satellite network, a terrestrial wireless network, a cable network, and a fiber optic network.
- 19. (New) A system for multi-casting video program content and non-video data over a distribution network, the system comprising:
 - a video program content;
- a non-video data contextually related to the video program content:
- a multicasting computer comprising a processor, a storage means, a memory, the memory including software instructions, the software instructions further instructions for:

receiving the video program content; receiving the non-video data;

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distributing the video content program via a distribution network according to a multi-cast protocol; and

transmitting the non-video data contemporaneously with the video program content over the distribution network.

- 20. (New) The system for multi-casting video content program and data content over a distribution network of claim 19 wherein the multi-cast protocol comprises Internet Group Management Protocol (IGMP) and class D addressing with private multi-cast addresses.
- 21. (New) The system for multi-casting video content program and data content over a distribution network of claim 19, wherein the distribution network is selected from the group consisting of a satellite network, a terrestrial wireless network, a cable network, and a fiber optic network. --